



NEWS RELEASE

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USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT OFFERS HOUSING IN NEBRASKA TO HURRICANE EVACUEES

Lincoln, Neb., September 23, 2005—Efforts continue by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development in Nebraska to meet the housing needs of hurricane evacuees arriving in the state.

“We have been working diligently with federal, state and local agencies and numerous organizations to help house those left homeless due to Hurricane Katrina,” stated Nebraska State Director Scot Blehm, USDA Rural Development.

USDA Rural Development officials at both state and national levels have been assisting in Katrina relief efforts since the hurricane struck. In Nebraska, USDA Rural Development has contacted and holds ongoing communications with the Governor and Lieutenant Governor’s offices, Red Cross, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Nebraska Emergency Management Agency, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Nebraska Investment Finance Authority, the Nebraska Department of Economic Development, Peoples City Mission, multiple housing authorities, rescue missions, churches and faith-based organizations and various other organized efforts to assist in helping displaced victims.

“USDA Rural Development has over 400 rental units available statewide for evacuees,” continued Blehm. “As state and local agencies interview persons displaced to Nebraska, USDA Rural Development housing specialists stand ready to help. A woman from Biloxi, MS entered her apartment last week in Lexington. An elderly man from New Orleans, LA has been placed in a complex in Uehling. As the need occurs, we assist.”

Housing units available to evacuees, are in rental apartment complexes financed by USDA Rural Development through its’ Rural Rental Housing program. Due to the hurricane, certain regulations under this program have been waived such as USDA Rural Development being authorized to provide the complex’s owner with a waiver for evacuees’ security deposit. Additionally, a provision has been granted to provide Rental Assistance to evacuees for up to 6 months. For evacuees with no income, Rental Assistance basically pays their monthly rent and provides funds to help cover utility costs.

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